

The Edwin
Forrest House,
New York City.
436 W. 23rd St.
New York Co.

HABS No. 4-14

HABS
NY,
31-NEYO,
16-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

District No. 4
Southern New York State

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
Wm. Dewey Foster, District Officer.
25 West 45th Street, New York City.

THE EDWIN FORREST HOUSE

436 West 22nd Street, New York City

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The site of this house was deeded by Clement C. Moore to George Coghill, a weaver from England, in 1834. Though the deed bears this date, it is said that the house was erected four years earlier, in 1830. Its design is supposed to have been a replica of the residence in Leeds, England, of the wife of George Coghill. In 1839 the property was sold to Edwin Forrest and was retained by him until 1856. We note that: "In No. 436 West 22nd Street lived the famous actor, Edwin Forrest. Here, with his wife Katherine Sinclair, a beautiful English woman, he lived for many years while at the summit of his fame. At his receptions he entertained many of the most distinguished men of his day, unthinking of the domestic unhappiness that made wretched his later years" ("Early New York Houses" - Pelletreau.)

The property passed to Philip F. Pistor in 1856, a professor at Columbia University; and in 1879 was deeded to Sarah M. Drummond, the wife of James F. Drummond; in 1908 it came into the possession of their children, Dr. Isaac Wyman Drummond (1855-1933) and his sister, Mrs. Katherine M. Herbert, the present owner. Dr. Drummond, a graduate of the Columbia School of Mines, became an authority on paints, pigments and minerals. He was associated with the firm of paint manufacturers, Devoe and Reynolds, was a director of the Bowery Savings Bank and of the School of Applied Design for Women. He was an art collector of great distinction and his marvelous collection of Oriental jades, amber, ivories and

Edwin Forrest House

lacquer is now housed in the Museum of Natural History in New York.

The House

The exterior shows an unpretentious three story and basement red brick façade, with brownstone stair and a Doric columned doorway, also of brownstone. It is now one of a row, all more or less similar. The windows of the upper floor were enlarged at a later date, with iron balconies placed in front of them. At the rear are elaborate wooden porches which date from 1880; they overlook a garden which formerly was quite noteworthy.

On the interior the imposing stair hall with its circular stairs is the most striking feature. The floor here is of black and white marble blocks, laid diagonally; the trim is painted ivory; and the walls are covered with a heavy embossed paper of dark color with a golden-colored frieze. The stair string and balusters are very fine. The wood screen at the back of the hall was added by Mr. James Drummond about 1880. The door trims in the Hall are excellent.

Across the rear on the first floor extends the spacious Living Room, a handsome Neo-Grec room with notable pedimented doorways and beautifully spaced pilasters; there is an ornate panelled ceiling of later date (1909). The color scheme in this room is ivory and gold trim, doors and pilasters; dull red walls; ceiling of cream, blue and gold - all attractively harmonized. The floors are parquet. The original trim throughout the first and second floors is of excellent design.

The house, both on the exterior and the interior, shows a quiet and refined dignity, which has been preserved by the various owners.

Approved

Written by

Albert E. Flanagan

April 27th 1934

Albert E. Flanagan

*Reviewed
1936, H.C.F.**Ann Drury Tait*